

HIGH SCHOOL

Alabama senate bill could bar public schools from AHSAA membership



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On Tuesday, the [Alabama State Senate](#) introduced a bill that would severely limit the powers of the [Alabama High School Athletic Association](#).

The bill, labeled Senate Bill 73, was read for the first time on Jan. 13. The bill says that a public K-12 school in Alabama cannot be a member of an athletic association that doesn't have a board that "is comprised of at least 50 percent of members who are appointed by the Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, President Pro Tempore of the Senate or the Lieutenant Governor." The bill goes on to say that at least 15 members of the board would need to be appointed by the government.

The second part of the bill says that a public school cannot be a member of an association that has regulations on the eligibility of a student-athlete that goes against the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act.

If the bill passes it would mean that the 300-plus public schools that make up the AHSAA would not be able to stay members of the association without the AHSAA making changes to follow the guidelines laid out in the bill.

Currently there is no other league for public high schools to compete in Alabama. There is the Alabama Independent Schools Association for private schools and Alabama Christian Athletics Association for smaller Christian schools.

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This is the latest challenge brought by the Alabama government against the AHSAA. Governor Kay Ivey and Speaker of the House Nathaniel Ledbetter are suing the association over its interpretation of the CHOOSE Act. Last year the state house had bills to bring Name, Image and Likeness to Alabama. There was also a bill that would've changed how the AHSAA counts English Learning Students for classification purposes.

That second bill, which passed the state house but was not voted on in the senate, would have also placed a member of the minority party from the House of Representatives and a member of the majority party of the Senate as non-voting members on the AHSAA governing board.

The AHSAA declined to comment but in April of 2025, when the state house tried to pass the bill that would've put two legislators on the AHSAA's board, Executive Director Heath Harmon gave the following statement.

"Since we are a private association, with our board makeup established under a federal court order, we would be the only private board with a mandate for political representation which would interject politics into high school sports. We strive to keep politics out of the boardroom and focus on doing what is best for all student athletes."

The bill still has to be voted on by the senate before moving to the house and governor's desk if it passes both. The bill says it would go into effect on October 1, 2026.

This comes as the AHSAA weighs [splitting up public and private schools](#) for championship play. A decision on that is expected on Jan. 23 when the AHSAA will announce reclassification and region alignments for fall sports.

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